

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, MT

SUBJ: MINTOFF ADDRESSES DRYDOCKS WORKERS

REF: VALLETTA 0544, MAR 16, 1973

1. SIXTEEN MONTHS AFTER MINTOFF DRESSED DOWN THE DRYDOCK WORKERS (REFTEL) HE MET THEM AGAIN ON THEIR HOME GROUND IN COSPICUA. THIS TIME HE CAME TO PRAISE THEM.

2. SPEAKING FROM LARGE PLATFORM FILLED WITH VIRTUALLY ALL CABINET MINISTERS AND SENIOR GENERAL WORKERS UNION OFFICIALS, MINTOFF PRAISED THE WORKERS FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN MAKING THE "YARD" A PROFITABLE ENTERPRISE. MINTOFF SAID THAT AFTER LOOSING 3.5 MILLION POUNDS IN 1970/71, 2.9 MILLION IN 1971/72, AND 1.7 MILLION IN 1972/73, THE YARD IS NOW BEGINNING TO MAKE A PROFIT. WORK TO BE DONE IN THE YARD IS ESTIMATED AT TEN MILLION POUNDS THIS YEAR AS COMPARED TO SEVEN MILLION LAST YEAR.

3. AS A REWARD FOR THEIR EFFORTS, MINTOFF SAID THAT GOM IS

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ALLOCATING FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS TO THE DRYDOCKS.

THREE HUNDRED WOULD PROVIDE FOR A ONE POUND FIFTY CENTS WEEKLY WAGE INCREASE. ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND WOULD GO TO THE YARD'S "CASH IN HAND". THE REMAINING ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND WOULD GO TOWARD AN "EXPERIMENT."

4. THE EXPERIMENT, MINTOFF SAID, WOULD INVOLVE THE POSTING OF SIGNS SHOWING THE COMPLETION DATE FOR WORK ON A PARTICULAR VESSEL, IF THE WORK ON THAT SHIP IS COMPLETED A DAY OR TWO BEFORE THE DEADLINE, THE SAVINGS WOULD THEN BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE WORKERS EVERY MONTH OR TWO.

5. MINTOFF ALSO ANNOUNCED THE PARITY BETWEEN INDUSTRIALS AND CLERICALS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED--A LONG STANDING DESIRE OF THE METAL WORKERS.

6. MINTOFF WAS GREETED WITH LOUD CHEERS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER HIS ADDRESS, AND THE GWU PAPERS PROCLAIMED THE EVENT AN "HISTORIC CHAPTER IN THE YARD'S HISTORY".

7. COMMENT: SOME OBSERVERS INSIST THAT THE YARD'S PROFITS ARE THE RESULT OF BOOKKEEPING SLEIGHT OF HAND, BUT EVEN IF THE YARD IS ONLY BREAKING EVEN, OR LOSING SLIGHTLY, THE REDUCTION OF THE HEAVY LOOSES OF EARLIER YEARS IS AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT. OF EQUAL OR GREATER IMPORTANCE TO MINTOFF IS THE CLEAR POLITICAL VICTORY HE HAS ACHIEVED.TUCKER

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